

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
Fish and Wildlife Service
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Lake Umbagog National Wildlife Refuge (NWR)
Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP)
Public Hearing - July 30, 2007 – Errol, New Hampshire

Tom Goettel: Okay welcome to the public hearing for the Lake Umbagog National Wildlife Refuge Comprehensive Conservation Plan. My name is Tom Goettel and I'll be your hearing officer tonight, and speaking of hearing, can everybody hear me okay back there? I work with the Fish and Wildlife Service in our Regional Office and my role here tonight is to facilitate the recording of your oral comments on the draft CCP. There is no presentation by the Service tonight. Instead, this is your opportunity to give us your thoughts and ideas and our opportunity to listen. We will be recording your testimony on video and audio tapes. The tapes will be transcribed by a professional court reporter later on and posted on our website in September. The transcript will become part of the CCP official administrative record. Your comments will be considered along with all written comments received. The Service's response to these comments will be in an appendix in the final plan. So here is the process for the rest of the evening and I've got a few ground rules here first. I will call individuals to the podium in the order listed on the sign-in sheet, which is right there. We have three names so far, and I wanted to remind you again this is part of the NEPA process, so I would encourage anybody who wants to speak tonight to sign up to participate as this is very important for us. So now is the time to add your name to the list if you haven't done so already. As you are called up the first thing you need to do is just state your name and spell it out, and again, that's just for the transcriber who will be transcribing for the record later on. After spelling your name you will have four minutes to provide your comments. You can read from prepared text or speak off the cuff. You need to stick to the allotted time, so Mr. Edwards over here will be sitting at the table here and he will hold up flashcards when you have two minutes left, when you have 30 seconds left and when your four minutes are up. Please be respectful of this time limit. If time permits you can sign up for a second opportunity to speak. We only ask that this second time provide new or different comments than what you provided the first time. Only one person will have the floor at a time so if you are not at the podium we ask that you respect whomever is speaking and remain quiet. I want to reiterate that our purpose tonight is to listen to and record your comments, your comments. We won't be answering the question or responding to any comments. We will end the hearing at the last speaker, or at 9:30 p.m. whichever comes first. And, before I call the first speaker I would like to introduce Nancy McGarigal who is our Planning Team Leader who has some additional information for you.

Nancy McGarigal: Thanks Tom. Um...in case you don't know Paul Casey the Refuge Manager here and Ian Drew, the Deputy Director Refuge Manager. I am impressed with the crowd tonight. This is one of the larger public meetings that we have had, and that

I've experienced, so I really appreciate you taking the time for being here. I realize you may be here with different motivations, but I really appreciate your taking the time to come out. I am a little surprised that so few people signed up to provide us comments. I'm not quite sure about that umm, I know a lot of people are intimidated speaking in front of a group, but I guarantee that a lot of other people have the same opinions or comments you have and we'd love you to start the ball rolling. As Tom mentioned, having public hearings is a required part of this environmental process since we have written an environmental impact statement. This is typical of the structure of a public hearing meeting, I know a lot of people don't like this formal structure, as they think its so controlled which is why we held an open house prior to the public hearing and held a public information session 2 weeks ago. Anyhow I wanted to remind you that this is the first of five of these open house public hearing sessions that we are going to have and there is a schedule in the back. Newry and Berlin are also this week. Also, we will be going to Concord and Augusta. So, I encourage you to attend those sessions as well to hear what your neighbors or other people in the state are commenting on. You are welcome to speak again at those sessions. Again, I am hearing tonight from people that unless they provide oral testimony tonight you won't be part of the record, that's not true. We still are accepting and encouraging written comments, so please do that if you are not inclined to speak tonight in front of the group. As the person who probably will be synthesizing and summarizing the comments that come in, I would also like to offer some suggestions of things that will be most helpful. What we are looking for are substantive comments on this draft comprehensive conservation plan proposal. Now honestly, I know there are a few in our audience tonight that have other agendas, I know, we all know, about some petitions in town right now. There are certain issues, that quite frankly about Paul, and some other business that he does. That really isn't the purpose of tonight. I am not the person to be providing those comments to, there is nothing I can do about it. I am not in his line of authority. There are other venues for that. I encourage – well not encourage, but you certainly as a citizen should provide those comments to the right person in the right forum. Tonight is not that night. We are here to talk tonight about the proposed management plan, the comprehensive conservation plan. Again we are looking for substantive comments. Now what is most helpful to me is not only hearing your opinion or your concern, but exactly why you feel the way you do. Again I had a conversation with a gentleman who said that I would like ATV's or four-wheeler use on the refuge and I said you need to explain some substance there. Like, why do you feel you want that activity to occur on the refuge? So, we are looking for not just to state an opinion but substantiation for that. Maybe we didn't explain ourselves well enough and we need some additional rationale that we should be providing in the final. Also, asking questions in your request or comments is not that helpful. What we tried to do in that forum a couple weeks ago, and in the open house, is try to answer your questions ahead of time so your comments would then be substantive. So again, elaborating on the reasons why you have your opinion would be most helpful. We would also be interested to know if you find factual errors or something needs to be clarified in the text. That would be very helpful. So, as Tom Goettel commented, we will be taking all these comments and summarizing and synthesizing them and will be responding to them in appendix in the final document. You will see how your comment was treated, perhaps we modified our proposal in response because of a comment that came in. That's not out of

the question, that we would step back, and rethink or beef up our rationale, and/or modify our proposal or management actions. So, these are all different ways we might treat your comments.

I just want to remind you that the decision maker in this process is our Regional Director who is based out of Hadley, Massachusetts, and that is Marvin Moriarty. We have announced an extension of the public comment period to September 21, that is, for another 30 days. That came basically came as a request of the public. We heard it loud and clear at the public information session two weeks ago weeks that the time period wasn't long enough, and so we extended it another 30 days. I know that that doesn't satisfy many people probably. It will satisfy some, but we heard people wanting that comment period to last another year or until spring, but it's just not possible with the process that we have and the number of plans we are trying to get through. But, again, Paul, his staff and I are at your disposal to try and answer all your questions and explain the document better, at your convenience so that you can comment in a timely manner.

So even if you speak here tonight, you are also able to submit written comments to either add to what you said, or elaborate them. Or, even if you don't speak here tonight you can still submit comments by the September 21 deadline. So, we encourage you to do so. With that, I'll ask Paul Casey if he wants to add anything.

Paul Casey: One thing I would add is if you have questions you can email them, or call, or stop by the office so that we can respond. If there are additional questions after this, you do have email accounts listed, or you have our phone number listed on there (handout). Please ask your questions. We specifically are making ourselves available during the public comment period so we can answer your questions.

Goettel: Okay, any procedural questions before we get started? Okay so we'll call our first speaker Bill Altenburg, I believe. I remind you to speak up and spell your name.

New Speaker: My name is William Altenburg, W-i-l-l-i-a-m A-l-t-e-n-b-u-r-g. My substantive comments are based on a quick review of the report. Essentially my concern is economic. The refuge has always done a good job with wildlife. What we are concerned about primarily is whether or not the refuge's proposed alternatives A, B and C have different economic impacts on the Upton-Errol greater Lake Umbagog area. The most important point is that as the expansion is proposed, and you can see, it extends from the four roads, Rte 26 and Rte 16, extends outward into, in effect, the timberlands. The timberlands are all accessed by gravel roads. The fundamental recreation opportunity to anybody visiting the Umbagog area is on those recreation gravel roads. Fundamentally, in the report there is no section that deals with the gravel roads. They are the primary recreation access and they are the economic lifeblood not only of the timber industry, but also of the recreation industry. So tourists, recreationists and logging industry depend on those roads. There is no mention of them, or of the plan for them, in the alternatives considered. It needs to be either in forest management, where you are calling for 15 years of no harvesting on the acquired lands, who will then maintain it and provide for those logging roads because they are the economic access to the economy of

this area. Second, there is no change fundamentally in the access or proposed facilities under alternatives A, B or C. So that Alternative A offers as much recreation access as Alternatives B and C. The listing of activities that are not allowed are not significant today because they are allowed on these lands. Once the land is transferred to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, these activities become prohibited, and they are major economic growth factors in recreation. These include as in the report, bicycling. That includes mountain biking, horseback riding, unauthorized ATV use, other off-road motorized vehicles, personal water craft, float planes, mushing, competitive events, geocaching, walking with pets, berry picking, gathering mushrooms and collecting firewood and fiddlehead ferns. In effect, as the boundary grows, the restricted activities grow. Those activities are what we enjoy practicing up here and we have the privilege of doing it under the private ownership of the timberlands now. The problem is there is no economic analysis of the decline in visitors that we'll get as a result of these lost uses. To best summarize it, if you go to the table 4.5 it says that there will be 14,000...11,000 fishing under Alternative A, there will be 14,000 fishing under Alternative B. The trick is, it also says that all of the difference is a result of increasing the boundary of the refuge. There are no new visitors. So, we have a problem. Alternative A is economically viable for this community, Alternatives B and C are not. (applause)

Goettel: Thank you. Our next speaker is Charlie Kurtz.

New Speaker: My name is Charlie, C-h-a-r-l-i-e, Kurtz K-u-r-t-z. I am representing the Umbagog Snowmobile Association. And my concern is the way the wording is done for snowmobile trails, and I am reading from the summary. As for other uses of the refuge, we would continue to allow snowmobiling on the trails now designated in cooperation with the Department of Resources and Economic Development NHDRED. It doesn't make any mention of the Maine counterpart, and in my interpretation this means that as land is acquired, we will not be allowed there. It also says in this same paragraph page 17 that we do not plan to increase opportunities for either snowmobiling or camping. I am here addressing the snowmobile issue. There is a ton of land being proposed to be purchased, 50,000 to 75,000 acres. If I am interpreting this right, it means that we can snowmobile on the present trails that are now in the 20,000 acres that the refuge has, and when they purchase this additional land we would not be allowed. I would hope that that would be reconsidered and that any acquisition of land with present snowmobile trails on it, that snowmobiling would be allowed to continue. Thank you. (applause)

Goettel: Thank you. Our next speaker is Paul Grenier.

New Speaker: My name is Paul Grenier. I'll spell my last name G-r-e-n-i-e-r and my concerns are...I actually have two concerns. One of them is economic. Because there is the potential for removing 49,000 acres under Proposal 2, and 76,000 acres in Proposal 3, from active timber harvesting or potentially active timber harvesting, this would have a regional impact far beyond the Lake Umbagog area. Berlin has a series of proposals for using low grade wood, be it a wood pellet plant or biomass fuel plant, and although I understand it is not the refuge's intent to remove that acreage from forestry practices, the reality of it is, non-governmental agencies such as environmental groups, typically tie up

wood bids in court until the stands rot in the forest. Therefore, my position is, I would support Proposal A. I think allowing the forest and allowing recreation to stand as we know it today is the best proposal for the area both locally and regionally. The second question is, you have on your list on the back which is part of all three proposals and it says creating Umbagog Lake working group which is supposed to resolve governmental agency conflicts and “user conflicts”. It is not clear how a governmental agency is gonna resolve user conflicts unless there are members of users who would be part of this working group. Whether it would be property owners along the lake, whether it would be boat users or snowmobile users, you have left that question very, very vague to the point where...are we gonna have Trout Unlimited people representing people who live up here, and recreate up here? And I would like to have that question answered when you send these out to the people who responded here. Thank you. (applause)

Goettel: Thank you. Our next speaker is Dan Roberge.

New Speaker: My name is Dan Roberge, D-a-n R-o-b-e-r-g-e. I’m a camp owner on the Magalloway River, and I just wanted to speak to endorse Proposal A. I think that the Wildlife Refuge is large enough. It’s actually, I believe, larger than the original mandate that was created in 1992 and every time a piece of property goes off, becomes government property, it goes off the tax rolls and it’s creating, as far as individual land owners, more of a tax burden. And that’s all I’ve got to say, is that I think that it’s big enough and we have to consider the people that live in this area as well as the animals in the area. Thank you. (applause)

Goettel: Okay thank you. Our next speaker is Bryan and I honestly can’t read that, I think it’s Lamirande?

New Speaker: My name is Bryan Lamirande spelled B-r-y-a-n L-a-m-i-r-a-n-d-e and I was a former land owner on the Magalloway River. I was involved in 1991 when the hearings first started and the refuge needed the help of the local community just to get this off the ground. We were told back then that our way of life would not change and that our traditional uses of the river in the area would not change. And with those promises we supported the acquisition of the land. It was shortly after that, that the entire river became no-wake. I was also involved with all of the meetings involved to get that back to its original use. There were some no-wake signs put up, but I think they were put in areas that were needed. I understand that this proposal right now does not involve limiting or restricting the use of watercraft on the river, or limiting the size of the motors, but since this is a public hearing and it is for the record, I just want to state that I do not support restricting the use of watercraft on the river anymore than what is currently being restricted. And, anything that goes forward at all I’m opposed to it if it involves limiting the use of boating for us, compared to what it currently is traditionally used at. (applause)

Goettel: Thank you. Our next speaker is Eddie Deblois.

New Speaker: My name is Eddie Deblois. The last name is spelled D-e-b-l-o-i-s. I live in Wentworth Location on the Magalloway River and have been living there for approximately five years. I have owned a camp up there since 1986. As Bryan stated, when you came here some years ago you pretty much told us that you were not gonna change our way of life up here and take away the things that we do whether it's boating, snowmobiling or actually use of the woods, logging, hiking, doing the things that we do. We see, it looks like, that a little bit at a time, you are trying to do some of those things and we up here that live here and play here oppose that. Um...we hear that you want to take the boat landing that is at the current facility at the Wildlife, you want to take that out of current use. We have a lot of people that have camps in the area or homes, they do use that boat landing. My recommendation is to keep that open and if you are going to close it, don't close it until you get another boat landing that is accessible to all the people that have power boats. Don't just put landings in for canoes and kayakers. Let's take care of the people that live here and we use the lake and the river with our power boats. (applause). You know my opinion is we really don't have a need for a new wildlife center. I mean you built a wildlife center up there that probably costs a couple of million dollars. In my opinion, it is underutilized and to spend another five million dollars to put one out on the lake is I think a waste of our money, its taxpayer's money. We support you people. If it wouldn't be for our tax dollars paying your wages and the things that you do, you wouldn't have the things that you have right now and I think that is a waste of money and that's my opinion on that. (applause). As far as additional land purchases, you came, you told us what you were gonna do was to buy this amount of land and you did that and we accepted it and we co-existed this amount of time, but everybody's concern, I remember back then, was they will take a little now, they will take a little bit more. The first thing you know they are going to own everything and then we are not gonna have access here. Well my opinion on that is you do not need anymore land acquisition, you have enough land now to preserve the wildlife in this area. (applause) One of the things that really kind of gets me, and I know a lot of the folks here, is that what's happening here is people from Massachusetts, Connecticut and New York, Sierra Club, who knows where...they don't even live here, they don't even know the area and they are the ones that are making decisions on our place that we live and we pay taxes and our playground. And, I think that is totally wrong. And this little group here...I don't know if it can change the minds of what your plans are. We are hoping that it will, but we can't go and tell the people in New York City how to live, tell them you can't drive your car, you can't take the subway ten times a week, and they shouldn't be telling us how we are going to use our land here in Northern New Hampshire. And, I think (applause) with all of that said, the only thing I have not, and I wish that it would have been more publicized in the beginning, where people would have had an idea of what Plan A was all about, Plan B was all about, and Plan C was all about and really people don't have much of an idea. I know you had meetings before, but not many people knew about them, or attended them, and that was a problem. So, for us to stay here and say we approve Plan A or Plan B or Plan C without having full knowledge of what you are planning is pretty hard to do but from what I know of it, I say Plan A looks current, what you are doing right now, and I think that is plenty. That's my say in it. (applause).

Goettel: Thank you. Our last speaker...um...it is pretty safe to say we are we are not going to run out of time. The last speaker is Robert T Folsom.

New Speaker: Thank you and good evening. My name is Robert T Folsom and that's F-o-l-s-o-m. I just have a few brief comments. I see a correlation between the original environmental assessment which the refuge claimed that they would not have control of the open water on Umbagog Lake. Now in the new proposal, I see that they are asking for combined enforcement along with the New Hampshire Marine Patrol and the Fish and Wildlife...not Fish and Wildlife, excuse me, the Maine Warden Service. I think they are doing an excellent job, the Warden Service, I don't think they need any help. I see a correlation between that and restricting some of these uses that you have here. For instance dog sledding. I seem to have a real problem with that...um...the Mahoosuc Guide Service has been operating in this area for many, many years. They have never had any problems. They will be completely out of business. They have about 40 dogs that they just are dedicated to and I don't see where they have any negative effect on, maybe I'm not aware of something, however I think that that's gonna be the case. And with other people using four wheelers to get out to islands and so forth. As soon as the refuge has enforcement, joint enforcement actions, I can see them saying no four wheelers on the lake to get out to the islands, and no four wheelers to go out to set up campsites for the Mahoosuc Guide Service, or any of those. So I think Plan A seems like a good plan, although it seems like the enforcement action is going to be in Plan A as well or any of the others, because it says it is common to all of them. So I think that that needs to get changed. We were advised that there would be traditional uses and that...was advised that with traditional uses, but these traditional uses seem to be overlooked and I just wanted to go on record saying that I think we need to stand by the original plan and not have enforcement on the open water which is going to restrict us severely. Thank you very much. (applause).

Goettel: Okay thank you very much. Anybody else would like to come up? Alright, our next speaker is ...

New Speaker: Karen Brown. K-a-r-e-n B-r-o-w-n. First of all, I would like to say that I wasn't aware of the informational meeting. It wasn't publicized in the flyer that I got and I probably would have come and met some of you all sooner. So, perhaps you would want to have another round of informational meeting is what I'm hearing here today, and extend your period so that more people can get the benefit of the explanation that apparently just a few people got. I went on the U S Fish and Wildlife website to do a little more research. I haven't been able to plow through the entire report because, of course, you can't read the maps on the website and the original printed maps were illegible. So everybody bent over backwards and got me copies, Lelaina, Nancy and wherever Bill Zinni is. One of the original reasons for the refuge was to protect Eagles and Black Ducks. Now, the Eagles are no longer endangered, and according to the website, estimates for American Black Ducks and Ring-necked ducks are now significantly above their long term averages. So, it sounds like whatever you are doing in Plan A, as it stands right now, is working...um...Plan B and C, Expanding the Refuge. I understand that the 2008 budget, federally, has reduced the amount for land acquisition.

Funding for projects has also decreased, resulting in reduced need for acquisition management. This reduction for acquisition management would result in a staffing reduction. It sounds like Plan B and Plan C are flying in the face of what the United States Fish and Wildlife Service is saying. Am I getting close here? On permanent policy for refuges, one of the things it says is...completion of existing refuges is one of the four main topics, so I would think that perhaps completing what you've got bitten off now, before you chew something else, might be helpful. And also, management of the increase and operation and maintenance costs, and that brings me to workforce planning. Part of what the Service is trying to do is reduce the number of staff. You are doing complexing, you're outsourcing. I think Nancy's place in Hadley is now outsourcing its IT, instead of doing it in-house trying to keep headcount down. But, if you look at Appendix H it looks like we are going to have this little fiefdom of federal employees up here and one of the goals is that the refuge system will also use contracts where possible to minimize the continuing costs associated with permanent refuge staff positions. There is also some comments about keeping any of the visitor centers, either on 26 or on 16, rather than out at the end of the road at Potter's Farm. And, I concur with the gentleman who suggested that maybe spending \$5 million in 2005 dollars, God knows what it would be now, to renovate Potter's Farm. You might be able to do that with one of The Nature Conservancy, or someone else, who might be able to go in there and partner rather than try to do it by the federal government by itself. Thank you. (applause)

Goettel: Thank you. Is there any other speakers before we get back to Mr Altenberg? Anybody else?

New Speaker: Hi, my name is Jim Grant, G-r-a-n-t. I worked with you guys a little bit, and I appreciate your efforts so far. This doesn't pass the common sense test to prevent development. Okay...and that's what Plan B and C do in my opinion. It also states that we have a privilege to fish, basically that could be shut down at any time. I don't understand that. There have been people fishing here for years, eons. So I guess there is a high "nanny factor"...what I call a nanny factor, when the government becomes involved. And I don't think...I think Plan A, keeping things the way they are, is probably the best way to go right now. That's the way I see it. Thank you. (applause)

Goettel: Okay. Anybody else before we get into round two?

New Speaker: My name is Jennie Bernier. J-e-n-n-i-e B-e-r-n-i-e-r. I just have a quick...a couple of quick comments, the first being that I'm from the Upton Snowmobile Club and I concur with what Charlie said from the Errol Snowmobile Club's point of view that we need access to more than just the designated, already existing trails and I have sent that in written comment already. The other thing that I want to mention that I'm not sure that people are aware of...I've been told twice by representatives from your agency that we will always be able to have these activities that are listed over on that poster in the refuge, when in your CCP, in the first chapter page 8, it says that anytime the refuge manager may re-evaluate the compatibility of any use at any time, and that the refuge manager may allow or deny any use even one that is compatible based on other considerations. So, even though we have been told that we can do all these things, it says

right in here that at any time the manager can change his mind and deny our access to those activities. Thank you. (applause)

Goettel: Thank you. Anybody else before we hear Mr Alternberg? Anybody?

New Speaker: William Altenburg. My concern continues on looking at the details. One of the great advantages of this area is that people come here because they get the sense of freedom. They enjoy back country recreation, they enjoy outdoor recreation, in a non-structured setting because it gives them a sense of freedom and allows them to participate. The more structured and enforced the regulations on the land become, the less attractive that recreation base is. That's the recreation base we depend on. The economic study does not recognize either the unique nature of the economy in this area or its generators. A classic example is in the section which calls for all paddle guides on Lake Umbagog to be registered. The idea of Northern Waters, ourselves, or anybody else having to register in order to go on Lake Umbagog is a classic example of bureaucratic interfering with the ability of small entrepreneurial businesses to start up and operate. We simply don't need that. If you go through other, and look at the budget, it calls for a full time enforcement officer. The full time enforcement officer will have to enforce the 35 mph speed limit on the snowmobile trails. Yes, you can use them, but you can't go over 35 mph. In addition, there are no competitive events allowed. That means no poker rallies, no other competitive opportunities. Here in this location we are trying to build the economic base of the area by growing economic opportunity using recreation and nature based tourism. The problem is, there is an enforcement barrier being erected. It removes opportunity for new recreation, it places restrictions on current recreation use, and it does it within a new setting and that is the setting of a regulated structure. That's why Alternative A is compatible with a history, culture and economic potential of this area, and Alternative B is not. The worse case scenario comes when you look at what happens to Upton. Upton gets almost entirely taken as a town. In addition, no matter whether you look at the tax revenues that are lost, and then the Fish and Wildlife Service payments in lieu of taxes, they come out a net loser by \$1,700 according to your own numbers. That's a devastating blow to a town that's a part of the economic base of this community. So you've got to go back and start from scratch and look again and look at your economic alternatives. You need to get a reliable consultant team, not use your internal people, and I know almost everybody who worked on your core group. They are all really competent, they are all well motivated, but there are areas outside their expertise that were not addressed in this study...if you go back and have to choose, you want Alternative A. It will not be economically disruptive, it will allow economic growth within the community and encourage the kind of marketing sense that we've advocated to the State of New Hampshire and that is this is the place to come and feel free, free to use the land, use it wisely but feel free. Do not look for an enforcement officer regulating minor sporting activities. Thank you. (applause)

New Speaker: Eddie Deblois. A closing comment for myself. I know there are a lot of people that are a little bit intimidated to come and speak before a large crowd, so I guess what I was going to ask to do is...ask who is in favor of Plan B or Plan C in this room. But I think probably...I think I know what the answer is, so how about if I put it this way.

Is there anybody in this room that's in favor of Plan B or Plan C? Raise your hand. This is the community. These are the people who live, work, play here. We have one gentleman that rose his hand in favor of Plan B or C. That's all I have to say. (applause)

New Speaker: Bob Folsom again. F-o-l-s-o-m. A few other thoughts that came to mind. The gentleman that spoke just before the last gentleman, I think he's got a good point there about keeping things the same. When I came here 20 years ago, Buster Williamson and I used to fish in B Pond. One of the things about fishing there at B Pond was, you had to walk in. It wasn't an easy walk, there was mud and so forth, and now I hear there is talk about putting a boat ramp in B Pond. I think that's absolutely absurd. We don't need a boat ramp. There is some good fishing in there, you won't always catch a fish, but it's good exercise to go in. We don't need to drive in and have people backing down with boats. My other concern was as I drove down to Lake Ossipee I went along the nature...

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START OF TAPE – SIDE B

...is not open to motor vehicles. I don't have two days to get into B Pond, back in and out again, so I think that leaving B Pond just the way it is and keeping everything in Plan A seems to be a good plan. I think that there are some good, you know, I don't want to come across like I think the refuge is a bad idea. I think it is a good idea. We want to protect the lake. We don't want to have wall to wall condominiums from one end of the lake to the other with the smell of septic systems and so forth and I'm hoping that the refuge eventually will meet that goal by preserving the lake and eliminating those types of constructions so my message is if it's not broke don't fix it. Thank you very much. (applause)

New Speaker: My name is Adam McLain. M-c-L-a-i-n. I'm a camp owner up in Magalloway. I don't think we should do any of these until we have given Paul and Ian and those guys enough money to finish the task that they have already started, camps that aren't torn down, land they purchased, they haven't been able to clean it up. The river is eroding on the Magalloway River and they keep telling us in five years they will put some rock up and do something to it. They need to fix some projects they have already started. I don't believe it needs to grow at all. They want to take the...they are talking about taking the boat access away by the Old Brown House Door because of safety reasons. I can understand the concern, I've used it a lot. If we are going to take it away they need to give us another one and it shouldn't be more than five miles away. We shouldn't have to come to Errol to do it. I think they have done a great job in a lot of things and I thank them for that and that's it. (applause)

Goettel: Anybody else?

New Speaker: Good evening. My name is Dona Larson. D-o-n-a L-a-r-s-e-n and on my next birthday I will have spent 61 years on Umbagog Lake. I think I know it pretty well.

I have been sailing on the lake, skiing on the lake, ATViing on the lake, snow-machining on the lake, skating on the lake when the conditions are right, playing bocce ball on the lake. I have a camp on Lake Umbagog and I know how fortunate I am to be there. In fact, if it wasn't for this meeting, I would be back there right now. I was not able to download everything off of the computer, the maps and the pictures didn't come out very well, but I did read in depth the summary of the plan. A concern I have with utilizing Potter's Farm as a visitor center, which we all thought should have been done to begin with instead of taking Brown Owl and spending millions of dollars on a government building, is rehabbing Potter's Farm. I'm concerned about the road travel on Mountain Pond Road. What is going to happen to Mountain Pond Road using that as an access to the visitor's center unless there is some other road plan that I didn't see in your planning? Um...I'm also concerned where the kiosks and informational outlooks are going to go on Rte 26. There was no mention of that in either Plan B or Plan C. How much is that going to cost, where are they going to go? I strongly support Plan A. I think to echo what everyone else has said this evening, you have got your hands full with what you are doing now. I would like to see a better job of managing the refuge as it is. We don't need to preserve anymore land in Northern New Hampshire. We need to use it for recreation. I mean you can't even pick mushrooms on federal land? Give me a break. You can't fish on federal land? I mean these are traditional uses that we have been using and I have been using for a number of years and I hate to see our traditional uses be abandoned so that no one can use the refuge basically. I strongly support Plan A. I think that you need to finish what you're doing before you bite off more than you can chew. Thank you very much. (applause)

Goettel: Thank you.

New Speaker: My name is Irene Foster. My husband and I have been on Magalloway for over 20 years now. We have a camp. F-o-s-t-e-r. The first name is Irene, I-r-e-n-e and I must also agree with most of the people who have spoken here today, but I have to comment on one thing and that is having not been able to read completely except very quickly this...having tried to download and not being able to download, I look at A, B and C as really giving us no choices. I was taught how to sell, and one of the things that we were taught was give your people three chances, all of which you want. And that's what you've done here. You have given us three examples of what the Fish and Wildlife wants. No examples of what the people in the area want. So, that's my one comment about the process. The second thing I have to say is about the restoration and reclaiming that has been going on, especially up in Little Berlin area. The reclaiming of the land after purchasing the buildings is really...has not been environmentally correct. Most of the places that I've seen and I just took a walk today and took pictures of the land that was reclaimed with stones...not stones...wood, metal...um...nails, equipment, plastics all sticking up out of the ground, some of which I had to go through because I know Leon Bushey's, I think that's his name, land was taken a long time ago and still there is a stove there, a washing machine and other things still on the land so I have to agree with most of the people that commented already today and that is take care of what you have already and if you want pictures I will send you pictures. I took about 40 of them today of the land that has been reclaimed. Thank you. (applause)

New Speaker: Name's Dave Miller, M-i-l-l-e-r. I have a place in Upton. I've been coming up there since the 60's and the gentleman back here kind of smoked me out as someone tentatively for Plan B, and I think I ought to come up and say why and the reason is that I think it's better, more likely to preserve the things that you want and everyone here wants more than the alternatives. Think of what's going on in this country. I can see in ten years if the wildlife preserve is confined to its existing area that these other areas will be bought up by outside developers who will put in sub-divisions, homes, vacation resorts and things like that and do you think they are going to let you hunt on their land or run their snowmobiles on their land or your ATV's? I doubt it. And I think our best bet is what the wildlife preserve people are planning. Thank you. (applause)

Goettel: Anybody else?

New Speaker: My name is Jim Silverberg, S-i-l-v-e-r-b-e-r-g, and my wife and I are part owners of a camp in Upton on the lake. I'm from Florida but I was lucky enough to marry a girl from northern New Hampshire. So, I can speak from someone who lives in Florida and gets up here as much as I possibly can, that this area is different than any other area I have ever visited in the United States. The people, their customs, there uh...it's wonderful. Even sitting on Main Street in Berlin, I get a big kick out of that because it is not Florida. It is just a wonderful place, and to see things over the last 28 years and enjoy the enjoyment that I have up here and see what the people have up here and the hunting and the fishing and the wildlife, we want to keep it as much as possible like it is right now and I would have to say that Plan A seems still to be the very best plan out of the three. Thank you. (applause)

Goettel: Thank you. Anyone else?

New Speaker: My name is Barry Kelley. B-a-r-r-y K-e-l-l-e-y and I'm a lifelong resident of the North Country. Looking at, reading through the booklet that I received, it says Congress authorized the establishment of the refuge in 1992 for the purposes of conserving the unique diversity of wetlands, habitats and associated wildlife and protecting water quality in the area. It's a noble mission and it's been...they are doing it, but obviously from what I hear tonight, they are not doing it well enough in terms of public outreach. One thing I don't like about the plan is you are giving only A, B and C. But it's like going to a dealership and asking for air conditioning on the car and the only way you can get it is by buying the preferred option's package. You have to have a sunroof, power windows, maybe an upgraded sound system. There are many lists, many of the items listed in Alternative B in the back of the book, can be accomplished with the existing amount of land. I don't think that you need 49,718 more acres to accomplish about 90% of your goals with the exception of making it get a little big larger. I mean when it came in, it was to protect the undeveloped areas of Umbagog and basically we were all in favor of that for many of the reasons people have said here tonight because it is a wonderful place, we wanted it protected. The key now is to help us protect those other lands while maintaining the age-old cultural uses on that land. (applause) The

government should be a partner, not a controlling influence. There are a lot of pious platitudes in this statement. What you should do...the Latin term is *Age quod agis*, "do what you do." Get down to the basics. You don't need to buy that much more land to do what you should be doing on this refuge. I'm...what many of the people are against, a \$4 million or \$6 million new visitor center...I think that's great because that's the investment up here and that's what we want. We want things to happen. We don't want to eliminate change. We want to manage change. When the government takes over another 50,000 acres the biggest problem is many times they don't have the money to manage it, to use it and it becomes protected because they don't have the funds to do what they wanted to do in the beginning. What I'm saying is why don't you use some of the money that maybe you could buy this land with, put it into programs, get a group together that could look into ways of protecting those 50,000 acres but still keep it in private hands. So, when you want to extend a snowmobile trail you can sit down with the landowner and get an answer in a day or two and not have to go through the number of steps that you have to with a large group like the government. I love my country, but sometimes I'm afraid of the government only because it has become so big you can't make the elephant dance. It just takes a long time to get anything done and too many times it's a way of not allowing things to happen. You just throw your hands up and appeal to higher authority, and say I'm sorry it has got to go back to Washington and I can't give you an answer yet and nothing happens. And that's the thing that I fear happening on the rest of it. You are asking us to give...and I say not asking us, you are asking people who own this land to give up future opportunities to the government. We don't know what it is gonna be like around here in 100 years. Your plan is 15 years. There has got to be a way of protecting some of these lands postponing some of these permanent decisions for a few more years. Go do a bang up job on the refuge so that when we come back here in ten years or twelve years in anticipation of the next plan, people are standing up and saying you guys did a great job, my kids come up here, they love coming to that refuge, they love this, they love that...make it a stellar project. Spend some money to educate people about it. The studies that you talk about...we have a threat I just read about in the papers from an invasive species coming over from the Connecticut. That's something you guys should jump on, that's a big thing for Umbagog. Spend a lot of money but do something that makes us feel good about the refuge before you tie up 50,000 acres and when it's tied up with the government it is tied up forever. Thank you. (applause)

Goettel: Okay, anybody else?

New Speaker: Mike Dubose, D-u-b-o-s-e. I have been a land owner on the lake since 1962 in Magalloway Plantation and I want to second what a number of people have talked about, the economic impact on the local area. The more property that's acquired, the less there is on the tax roles. I think if you look at some of the state parks that have been created in Maine, the impact on the local communities is significant and the more property that is purchased around Errol and around Upton begins to look like a big state park and I really wonder whether that economic impact on the schools, on the ability to run good schools for the school children, whether that has been adequately assessed by the folks putting together these plans. It does not seem to have been, so I second what a

number of people have said on that. The other is I think we are allowed to recommend things that aren't in the options, in other words, that they be included in the options, and I am not trying to be cute about this but one thing I would like to see and one option...I favor Schedule A, I'll get that right out...I mean Option A...is if there was an option that actually reduced the amount of monitoring, assessment, tagging, tracking, etc. of local habitat including the loon and osprey populations because there is a lot of talk about doing assessments of what public uses impact is on say the osprey and loon population but it does not...I think it deserves a study to see what the effect of all of the studying has done to the loon and osprey population (applause) and finally just...less detail maybe more philosophical but the more land that is acquired I think it would nearly double the amount of federal ownership in other fee simple or easement in Plan B, nearly triple I guess the amount in Plan C. The more federal ownership there is, the more federal government there is, and I don't trust the appropriations process, you know. I think Paul has been...Paul Casey has been working on this refuge for a number of years now. A couple of people have alluded to this, a lot of what he is able to do or capable of doing is depending on appropriations. And in D.C., the first thing to get cut when it comes to appropriations is usually fish and wildlife or environmental. And, it is one thing to buy the land, it is another thing to manage it and managing the land requires money and I just...I don't think you'll get the ongoing commitment for appropriations to do that adequately. And finally, just generally...um...I think the more land that's acquired by the government, the more the presence of the federal government in the area generally, and I favor smaller government, I'll be honest about that. I work for the federal government but I don't think you need more of us here. Thanks. (applause)

Goettel: Thank you. Anybody else?

New Speaker: I'm not back for an encore. I just wanted to say that...oh Barry, B-a-r-r-y K-e-l-l-e-y. It's important...the world is run by people who show up. You have all showed up here tonight and that's important, but you haven't all spoken and what goes on the record are the comments of the people who speak or the people who write letters. I would appeal to you to get...from...Ms. McGarigal to get...it's her office you write to. But it is very important that you write letters and state your comments. Succinctly why, why not, but write because that goes into the record and that's what makes the difference. Because these people are federal employees. They work for us. They have to listen to us. If 1,000 people from New York City write letters saying they want this only because they read an ad in maybe a wilderness magazine that says you should be supporting this, and they rip off a letter, that counts the same as you who may have lived here your entire life on this refuge and your family has been here forever. It makes just as much difference, because they are all owners and that's one of the tough things about having government ownership because there are about 260 million owners and when you have to satisfy all those people. It takes a lot of time and a lot of effort and in that time and effort to satisfy those people you spend a lot of money that could be better spent right here on this refuge with programs that would make it a better place to visit. So just appeal...please...it doesn't take much, I know you are not letter writers but just jot a note to express your stance on this thing. Thank you. (applause)

Goettel: Anybody else?

New Speaker: My name is Bill Bryant, B-r-y-a-n-t and I just want to...I guess Plan A is well in the lead and you could probably dumb up a few plans for A minus right now if you had one. I just want to...like Barry Kelley said...they have gone so far as to give you a comment form that you can fill out, tells you where to send it, the whole bit, and what he said about if you want to be heard this is still a democracy we think and here's an opportunity to do it. Now a couple comments on my own, my family has been in Oxford County since Massachusetts was part of Maine (laughter) and speaking of Buster Williamson, my mother was one of the first schoolteachers. Now having said that I would like to comment on the proposed boat ramp at Sturtevant Pond. Sturtevant Pond is a small pond. It is accessible now, it has got loons and eagles and all kinds of fish there. It doesn't seem that putting another boat ramp there makes a lot of sense. Some of the boat ramp things don't necessarily make a lot of sense but there is a lot of information for those of you who haven't read the appendix and the plan, there is a lot. If I sound like I'm wandering here it's because I have been spending a week in these books...well maybe that and some other reasons. The second part of it is, in many places here, we see the word enforcement and I don't know about enforcement in the refuge but I counted up United States, New Hampshire and Maine enforcement agencies and we already have nine. There seems to be little...I'm not sure that I understand and I guess we got to talk Paul...why we need more enforcement from the federals here. The other thing that I wanted to comment on is if some of you have read the summary...they are threatening to open this water for fishing, the government doesn't recognize its use as fishing even though it has been going on for quite a while. The other comment that I wanted to make is that...and I may have misread this that the refuge thinks they own the water to the old riverbed, that is before all the dams were built, and I don't know whether that's true or not but it is something that I am going to talk to Paul and get straightened out...so anyway the most important thing we probably have to do is write this form. Thank you. (applause)

Goettel: Anyone new want to come up?

New Speaker: I understand the rules, I just would like to break them a little bit. My name is Eddie Deblois, D-e-b-l-o-i-s. I guess we are talking about this expansion and spending a whole lot of money on a new center and a whole lot of things and is it 6, 8, 10 million dollars, who knows with the land acquisitions it's in the hundreds of millions of dollars. The problem is people really can't even get to the place because the road is so damn terrible you can't drive up. (applause) Why don't we get the federal government to fix the roads a little bit so we can have some access to the place and then we will talk about spending some money on some preservation. (applause)

Goettel: Thank you. Anybody else?

New Speaker: Yeah. My name is Normand Bergeron, N-o-r-m-a-n-d B-e-r-g-e-r-o-n. The first thing I got to say is reference to Bill Clinton and Monica Lewinsky. They asked Bill Clinton did you have sex with Monica Lewinsky. All he had to say was yes, case is

dismissed. People lost faith in Clinton. Well, I have lost faith in wildlife management. I read an article in the paper wildlife management people get, you know, did things that didn't belong there. Well, if they belong and they are managing a big tract of land and there is this little piece and they do it and they know it's wrong and they say well I did it, that's forgotten. But what about managing the rest of the thing? It should have been left just the way it was back years ago, people go in there, you do what you want. God put the land there for the people to use. They didn't put the land there for you to say what you can do, what they can do, and what they can't do. Now, they got like dog mushing, mountain biking, horseback riding, they put it down as uh...um...what the hell is it...they say it there...inappropriate. Well as far as I'm concerned, what's inappropriate? It would be me stripping right here and running around and shaking everybody's hand. There is nothing wrong with dog mushing, there is nothing wrong with mountain biking, there is nothing wrong with anything you can do, you know, as long as you do it right but if they stop everybody from using that, it ain't much good anymore. I don't care too much for myself...my kids and my grandchildren, it would be nice for them to have a place where they can go and do different things but when people say you can't...don't go pee behind that tree, that's inappropriate. What are you gonna do? Piss in your pants? (laughter) You know? So as far as I'm concerned, the Plan A is probably what you got to shove down your throat and take it, but in my own opinion this area should have left natural just the way it was before. Thank you. (applause)

Goettel: Anybody else? Anybody else? This is your chance so... We have plenty of time.

New Speaker: My name is Norman Mercier, M-e-r-c-i-e-r. I'm from Upton and after hearing everybody speak it's very interesting. A lot of people really feel emotional about what is taking place and nobody has talked about our First Amendment and our First Amendment seems like they are being violated. We have been endowed by our creator with certain rights that we cannot be alienated from. That's life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness and the word enforcement is intimidating and it's really creating a lot of tension in Upton and in this area because this is America and we're Americans and how come other Americans can tell other Americans what to do. There should be a plan where everybody fits in. The word 'we' should include all of us here, not just a certain group, which means the government. I just wanted to bring that up. Thank you. (applause)

Goettel: Anybody else? Anybody else?

New Speaker: Dan Roberge. I spoke earlier. The only thing I want to say at this point is, I hope that as you hold more and more meetings that get further and further away from this town hall, it may not sound very democratic, but I hope that you put a little more weight in what the people, the neighbors of this wildlife refuge say. It is very easy for people in Concord and in Augusta, where you are having all these other meetings, to say yeah, go ahead, buy another 70 thousand acres or whatever, but I hope that if it's possible that you can weigh your decisions on what the neighborhood has to say because that's what we are. That's it. Thank you. (applause)

Goettel: Anybody else like to come up? This is your chance. Anybody else? Okay I guess that's it. This concludes our first public hearing. Thanks to everybody for attending and your input and I know you've heard it a hundred times and I am going to say it again, I encourage everybody to submit your written comments to either Paul or Nancy later on tonight or any time in the future.

Casey: If you folks have additional questions, we will go back to the open house format if you would like to catch one of us until 9:30 for additional questions, we will be available.

Goettel: Thank you very much.

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